

THE * NONCONFORMIST * ➤ MUSICAL * JOURNAL

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DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF WORSHIP MUSIC IN THE NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE N.C.U. FESTIVAL	99
MENDELSSOHN AS AN ORGANIST	100
WESTERN KENT S.S. UNION EISTEDDFOD	101
MUSIC AT NEW COURT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TOL- LINGTON PARK	102
CENTRAL GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR UNION	103
OUR RISING SINGERS:—	
Miss Emily Davies	104
THE NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.—PRIZE COMPETITIONS.	104
THE NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION FESTIVAL AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE	105
THE N.C.U. CHORAL COMPETITION	108
THE LONDON S.S. CHOIR	109
ROCHESTER AND CHATHAM S.S. UNION EISTEDDFOD	109
MINIATURES:—	
Victoria Street Congregational Church, Blackpool	109
Victoria Street Congregational Church, Derby	109
CHURCH MUSIC IN THE SHETLAND ARCHIPELAGO	110
NONCONFORMIST CHURCH ORGANS:—	
Wesleyan Church, Morningside Road, Southport	111
ECHOES FROM THE CHURCHES:—	
Metropolitan	111
Provincial	111
STACCATO NOTES	112
TO CORRESPONDENTS	112
ACCIDENTALS	112

The N. C. U. Festival.

ONCE again we are glad to report favourably on the Nonconformist Choir Union Annual Festival. In every respect it was a great success. A larger number of singers attended than had ever taken part before, the huge Handel orchestra being all but full. The listeners, too, were far more numerous this year, and they were more enthusiastic and appreciative.

The singing seemed to us to be a distinct improvement upon that at any previous festival. There was more style about it; expression received very much more attention—a point that has hitherto been missed—and the “leads” were taken up promptly. There were some slips, as might be expected; but the performance as a whole was more like that of a choral society than of a lot of choirs meeting together for the first time. When it is remembered that many of those taking part had not been able (owing to distance) to attend any rehearsal; that the great majority of the provincial singers had been travelling all the previous night; that owing to the delay in delivering the books of music only about two months’ practice had been possible; that the character of the music to be learnt in that time was much more difficult

than that usually sung by the choirs—when all these things are considered, it must be admitted that the performance was an excellent one, and reflects great credit upon the singers and the various choir-masters who have so diligently instructed them.

It speaks well for our worship music that our churches possess such capable singers. The music in the places from which the singers come ought to be of a high order. If they can sing the Festival music correctly, they can sing almost anything in the way of anthems suitable for church use. The abilities of these singers ought to be made abundant use of in the churches, and the music, if necessary, be raised to their standard.

It was most encouraging to hear at many of the recent rehearsals, not only from the choirs and organists, but from ministers also, that the influence of the Nonconformist Choir Union had been to greatly improve the music at the Sunday services. This is the main object of the Union. It is something to have such a satisfactory concert as the Festival, but it is very doubtful if that would repay all those who have so much to do to make that concert a success, unless the result was that it influenced beneficially the Service of Praise. The teaching necessary to work up the music must make the singers more efficient, and thus enable them to sing their usual service music more correctly. This annual two or three months’ training ought to be highly instructive.

The Union is growing. From the list of choirs represented at the Festival, it will be seen how wide its field is. We want to see it still larger. How is it that such places as Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Norwich, Leicester, Derby, do not send contingents? Are there no enthusiastic and influential persons in these places to start the movement? If once set in motion it goes with a rush, in most places at least. In Liverpool, for instance, the Union, though only recently formed, can boast of having nearly 700 members, and looks like growing much larger. Every town should have its local union, and the members would find that not only musically, but socially it would be very helpful.

Reports of three choir competitions will be found in our columns this month; one in connection with the N.C.U. Festival at the Crystal Palace, and the other two in connection with the Sunday School Unions. We have great faith in the influence of these friendly contests in producing refined and delicate singing.

The competition at the Crystal Palace was keen. Four choirs entered, and their singing was a great improvement upon that heard at the competition in 1893. Unfortunately only one choir (the successful choir last year) entered in the larger choir class. It is difficult to account for this. We hope next year a “walk over” will be prevented.

We are pleased to note that M. Wiegand includes pieces from *The Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries* in his Organ Recital Programmes at Sydney Town Hall.

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WESTERN KENT S.S. UNION EISTEDDFOD	101
MUSIC AT NEW COURT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TOL- LINGTON PARK	102
CENTRAL GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR UNION	103
OUR RISING SINGERS:— Miss Emily Davies	104
THE NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.—PRIZE COMPETITIONS	104
THE NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION FESTIVAL AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE	105
THE N.C.U. CHORAL COMPETITION	108
THE LONDON S.S. CHOIR	109
ROCHESTER AND CHATHAM S.S. UNION EISTEDDFOD	109
MINIATURES:— Victoria Street Congregational Church, Blackpool	109
Victoria Street Congregational Church, Derby	109
CHURCH MUSIC IN THE SHETLAND ARCHIPELAGO	110
NONCONFORMIST CHURCH ORGANS:— Wesleyan Church, Mornington Road, Southport	111
ECHOES FROM THE CHURCHES:— Metropolitan	111
Provincial	111
STACCATO NOTES	112
TO CORRESPONDENTS	112
ACCIDENTALS	112

The N. C. U. Festival.

ONCE again we are glad to report favourably on the Nonconformist Choir Union Annual Festival. In every respect it was a great success. A larger number of singers attended than had ever taken part before, the huge Handel orchestra being all but full. The listeners, too, were far more numerous this year, and they were more enthusiastic and appreciative.

The singing seemed to us to be a distinct improvement upon that at any previous festival. There was more style about it; expression received very much more attention—a point that has hitherto been missed—and the “leads” were taken up promptly. There were some slips, as might be expected; but the performance as a whole was more like that of a choral society than of a lot of choirs meeting together for the first time. When it is remembered that many of those taking part had not been able (owing to distance) to attend any rehearsal; that the great majority of the provincial singers had been travelling all the previous night; that owing to the delay in delivering the books of music only about two months’ practice had been possible; that the character of the music to be learnt in that time was much more difficult

than that usually sung by the choirs—when all these things are considered, it must be admitted that the performance was an excellent one, and reflects great credit upon the singers and the various choir-masters who have so diligently instructed them.

It speaks well for our worship music that our churches possess such capable singers. The music in the places from which the singers come ought to be of a high order. If they can sing the Festival music correctly, they can sing almost anything in the way of anthems suitable for church use. The abilities of these singers ought to be made abundant use of in the churches, and the music, if necessary, be raised to their standard.

It was most encouraging to hear at many of the recent rehearsals, not only from the choirs and organists, but from ministers also, that the influence of the Nonconformist Choir Union had been to greatly improve the music at the Sunday services. This is the main object of the Union. It is something to have such a satisfactory concert as the Festival, but it is very doubtful if that would repay all those who have so much to do to make that concert a success, unless the result was that it influenced beneficially the Service of Praise. The teaching necessary to work up the music must make the singers more efficient, and thus enable them to sing their usual service music more correctly. This annual two or three months’ training ought to be highly instructive.

The Union is growing. From the list of choirs represented at the Festival, it will be seen how wide its field is. We want to see it still larger. How is it that such places as Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Norwich, Leicester, Derby, do not send contingents? Are there no enthusiastic and influential persons in these places to start the movement? If once set in motion it goes with a rush, in most places at least. In Liverpool, for instance, the Union, though only recently formed, can boast of having nearly 700 members, and looks like growing much larger. Every town should have its local union, and the members would find that not only musically, but socially it would be very helpful.

Reports of three choir competitions will be found in our columns this month; one in connection with the N.C.U. Festival at the Crystal Palace, and the other two in connection with the Sunday School Unions. We have great faith in the influence of these friendly contests in producing refined and delicate singing.

The competition at the Crystal Palace was keen. Four choirs entered, and their singing was a great improvement upon that heard at the competition in 1893. Unfortunately only one choir (the successful choir last year) entered in the larger choir class. It is difficult to account for this. We hope next year a “walk over” will be prevented.

We are pleased to note that M. Wiegand includes pieces from *The Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries* in his Organ Recital Programmes at Sydney Town Hall.

Mendelssohn as an Organist.

By F. G. EDWARDS.

(Concluded from p. 85.)

MENDELSSOHN modestly disclaimed being an organist. "I happened once to go to St. Paul's Cathedral," he said, "and hence I have been called an organ-player. I fear there are many persons better qualified than I am for this undertaking." Notwithstanding this disclaimer, Mendelssohn's organ playing was eagerly watched by our leading organists, some of the best of whom learned more than one lesson from him. "It was not," wrote Dr. Gauntlett, "that he played Bach for the first time here—several of us had done that. But he taught us how to play the *slow* fugue, for Adams and others had played them too fast. His words were, 'Your organists think that Bach did not write a slow fugue for the organ.' He also brought out a number of pedal-fugues which were not known here. We had played a few, but he was the first to play the D major, the G minor, the E major, the C minor, the short E minor,* etc. Even in those that were known he threw out points unsuspected before, as in the A minor fugue where he took the episode on the Swell, returning to the Great organ when the pedal re-enters, but transferring the E in the treble to the Great organ a bar before the other parts, with very fine effect. This shows that, with all his strictness, he knew how to break a rule. One thing which particularly struck our organists was the contrast between his massive effects and the lightness of his touch in rapid passages. The touch of the Christ Church organ was both deep and heavy, yet he threw off arpeggio passages as if he were at the piano. His command of the pedal board was also the subject of much remark."

Mendelssohn gave his only organ-concert—which we should now term an "organ recital"—in St. Thomas's Church, Leipzig, on August 10th, 1840, the year of the *Hymn of Praise*. The proceeds were in aid of the monument to Bach, which, almost entirely owing to Mendelssohn's exertions, was erected (in 1842) in front of the "Thomas School." He was exceedingly popular at Leipzig at the time; on hearing of the proposed organ performance, his mother said that if he were to announce that he would stand in the market-place in his night-cap, she believed that the people of Leipzig would pay for admission. Mendelssohn practised so hard for eight days previous to the performance that he "could scarcely stand upright, and walked nothing but pedal passages in the street." He played nine pieces, concluding with an extemporaneous fantasia. Schumann wrote a most appreciative account in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, beginning with "Would that I could recall last evening in these pages with letters of gold!" At the conclusion of the recital old Rochlitz embraced the brilliant disciple of Bach, saying, "I can now depart in peace, for never shall I hear anything finer or more sublime."

In the following month Mendelssohn was again in London. Accompanied by Dr. Gauntlett, he paid a visit to the first CC organ in England, then newly erected

* A great favourite of Mendelssohn's, and a lovely prelude and fugue.

in St. Peter's Church, Cornhill. My friend Miss Mounsey (then Miss Elizabeth Mounsey) was the organist at that time, and for a period of forty-eight years, having been appointed thereto in 1834, at the age of fourteen; she retains very vivid recollections of Mendelssohn's delightful personality and his wonderful organ playing. In one of his letters to an English friend he desires to be remembered to Miss Mounsey, "whose organ playing," he says, "I always recollect with so much pleasure." Mendelssohn played Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E minor, his own in C minor (op. 37, No. 1), his Fugue in F minor (not published till 1885), and concluded with Bach's Passacaglia. At Miss Mounsey's request he wrote a few bars of the last named as a memento, adding his name and the date, which is still preserved in the vestry of the church.†

Mendelssohn paid his second visit to St. Peter's within two years of the first. It was a Sunday morning in June. He arrived during the sermon, and waited in the vestry until its completion. The dismissal hymn to the tune "Austria" ("God preserve the Emperor") was being played over by Miss Mounsey, when Mendelssohn made his appearance in the organ loft. He afterwards playfully reminded her that she would not play before him on the occasion of his last visit, "but," he added, "you have been obliged to this time." He played the out-going voluntary, taking as his theme the hymn-tune which had just been sung, upon which he extemporised, without any possibility of premeditation, for half-an-hour in a most masterly manner, winding up with a fully-developed fugue. Four days later, at Christ Church, Newgate Street, he took the same theme (by request) and treated it extempore, with consummate variety and skill, in a totally different way, to the delight of his enchanted hearers. A curious incident occurred on this occasion. While Mendelssohn was playing Bach's Toccata in F, the A above middle C ciphered. He waited until the defect was remedied; but on his resuming, he held that same offending note alone for a moment, to which he added beautiful harmonies and passages, and then gradually led to the point at which he had been stopped. How he must have enjoyed his joke of leading his friends to suppose that the cipher had returned! Miss Mounsey, who was close to the keyboard, has kindly supplied the above particulars of Mendelssohn's playing at Christ Church on this occasion and at St. Peter's. She was also present (in 1837) at St. Paul's when those naughty vergers coerced the blowers into "striking." "Very deeply," she says, "was I impressed by hearing Bach's grand organ works for the first time, played by Mendelssohn on that fine old CCC organ."

Brief mention can only be made of Mendelssohn's organ performances on Hill's fine organ at the Birmingham Musical Festivals of 1837 and 1840; and at a Sacred Harmonic Concert, in Exeter Hall, on June 17th, 1842, when he played the St. Anne's Fugue with its

† The authorities of St. Peter's, with commendable veneration, have had the old key-boards and draw-stop jams enclosed in a glass case and hung on the vestry wall, where they can now be seen. Lying across the well-worn keys is Mendelssohn's autograph memento, dated "Sept. 30, 1840," above referred to. The large and inlaid draw-stop knobs will not escape attention.

noble grand Prelude, also an extemporaneous introduction to "The Harmonious Blacksmith," which he concluded with a fugue on the subject of Handel's air. In those days the console of the organ at Exeter Hall was reversed, so that the performer faced the audience. Reference must also be made to his visit to the Queen and Prince Albert at Buckingham Palace, on July 9th, 1842, which he so fully describes in a delightful letter to his mother. Mendelssohn first begged the Prince Consort to play him something on the organ, so that he (Mendelssohn) might boast about it in Germany; and the Prince "played a Choral, by heart, with the pedals, so charmingly and clearly and correctly, that it would have done credit to any professional, and the Queen sat by him and listened and looked pleased." Mendelssohn then played the chorus from his *St. Paul*, "How lovely are the messengers," when the Prince managed the stops for him quite cleverly, and both the Queen and he joined in the chorus by heart while Mendelssohn played. "I was really quite enchanted," he says, and we cannot wonder at it.

Mr. W. S. Rockstro, a pupil of Mendelssohn's, records an occasion when his distinguished master played his six Organ Sonatas (then recently composed) in the Catherinenkirche, Leipzig. "He played them exquisitely," says Mr. Rockstro, "the whole six, straight through, from the neatly-written MS. I remember noticing the wonderfully delicate staccato of the pedal quavers in the second movement of the fifth sonata, which he played on a single 8-feet stop, with all the crispness of Dragonetti's most highly-finished *pizzicato*." I have had the privilege of perusing these "neatly-written" MSS., and it may interest some of my brother organists to know that nearly all the movements are written on two staves, instead of three as printed, the pedal part being indicated with the abbreviation "Ped."

In the autumn of 1847 Mendelssohn, borne down with grief at the loss of his dear sister Fanny Hensel, sought the soothing influence of Swiss scenery, in company with his wife and family. Chorley, the English critic, visited him at Interlaken. In response to Chorley's entreaty that he should go with him to Fribourg to try the famous organ there, Mendelssohn laughingly replied, "No; those organists like no one to play but themselves. There is always some difficulty—and then there is the noise! I must give up organ-playing—and besides winter is coming, and we had better draw quietly homewards." The next day the two friends rowed across the lake of Brienz to Ringenberg, a solitary village having a little gray church, which is approached by rude steps carpeted with maidenhair and moss and small-leaved ivy. The church was open, and so was the organ, and there was no one to prevent him from playing. A peasant boy was found willing for a few pence to blow the bellows as long as Mendelssohn liked. The master musician sat down at the old village instrument and literally poured out his whole soul in a stream of exquisite music

"Which flooded the crimson twilight
Like the close of an angel's psalm."

His rich fancy kindled as he went on, and his face

was lighted up by that serene, bright smile, the highest and most beautiful of its many sweet expressions, which all who knew him delight to speak of. This was the last time that Mendelssohn touched an organ.

WESTERN KENT S.S. UNION EISTEDDFOD.

THE second annual Eisteddfod of this flourishing Union was held in the Public Hall, Gravesend, on Wednesday, May 30th, and was in every respect a great success. The Mayor of Gravesend presided, and the adjudicators were: vocal solos, Mr. R. B. Newth; choirs and quartettes, Mr. E. Minshall; pianoforte solos, Mr. W. J. Barton; violin solos, Mr. Henry Tolhurst; recitations, Mr. Alfred H. Miles. The energetic Hon. Secretary, Mr. John R. Creasy, ably assisted by Mr. Gurney Smith, made excellent arrangements for the proceedings.

A large number of entries were made in the recitation, vocal solos, and pianoforte solos competitions. At a preliminary hearing the respective judges weeded these down, and two in each class appeared before the audience. The performances in each contest were most satisfactory, and the winners were loudly applauded on mounting the platform to be "invested."

The most interesting items in the Eisteddfod were the quartette and Sunday-school choir competitions. Four parties—Bromley Congregational, Gravesend Presbyterian, Gravesend Princes Street Congregational, and New Eltham Congregational—entered for the quartette competition, the test piece being "God so loved the world" (Stainer), which had to be sung unaccompanied. The prize was won by the Bromley Congregational quartette for a very tasteful and refined rendering of the piece.

The choir competition, which was the last item on the programme, excited great enthusiasm. Unfortunately, as some of the choirs had to catch trains, the contest was somewhat hurried, and at the close Mr. Minshall was only able to announce his decision without comment. Five choirs competed, and they sang in the following order: New Eltham Congregational, Bromley Congregational, Gravesend Milton Congregational, Dartford Congregational, and Gravesend Princes Street Congregational. Each choir had to sing Macfarren's "The Lord is my Shepherd," unaccompanied, and a piece of their own selection, also unaccompanied. The singing of the New Eltham choir was very fair, attack good, phrasing good, but expression was wanting. The selected piece was very simple, but was tastefully rendered. Bromley choir sang with excellent expression and precision, but took Macfarren's piece too fast. The selected piece, "Blessed be the name of the Lord," was not a happy choice, the accompaniment being necessary to give full effect to the anthem. Gravesend Milton sang fairly well; the voices were good, but the parts did not blend nicely at one or two points. Dartford choir possesses some sweet voices, but one or two were much too prominent. The voices were not together at the end of the test piece. The selected piece was very easy, but was given effectively. Gravesend Princes Street choir sang with much taste; the voices were good (though one tenor voice was too loud); expression good, attack good, enunciation fair. The selected piece, "Softly falls the shades of evening," was beautifully rendered. The result of the competition was as follows: first prize, Gravesend Princes Street; second prize, Bromley Congregational (though they nearly equalled No. 1); and third, Gravesend Milton Congregational. All the choirs are to be complimented upon their general efficiency.

MR. SIMS REEVES is writing a book on the art and study of singing.



Music at New Court Congregational Church, Tollington Park.

New Court is one of the largest and best attended chapels in the north of London. The congregation formerly worshipped in Carey-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, but some years ago the "cause" was removed to Tollington Park, then quite on the outskirts of London. The neighbourhood has rapidly grown during the last twenty years, so the chapel is now in the midst of a thickly populated district.

The building is an imposing structure approached by a broad flight of steps. The interior is exceedingly comfortable, and the seats are well arranged for seeing and hearing.

The chapel is oblong in shape. Round three sides are spacious galleries. The handsome wooden pulpit is placed at the end, and in a large recess at the back is the organ, an unsatisfactory two-manual instrument, sadly lacking in body and foundation. Even if well placed, it would be unequal to leading such a large congregation; but being stored away in a deep cavern and with two huge pillars and a heavy beam in front of it (!) it is still more handicapped. When will architects and church building committees act with some common sense in regard to the placing of organs and choirs? In many churches it might be supposed the object was to smother the organ as something objectionable.

The choir, consisting of about thirty members, sit on either side of the pulpit on a slightly raised platform; but being thus divided and both divisions again some distance from the organ there is, as may be presumed, occasionally a little want of uniformity in the singing. Mr. T. Bound is the capable

and experienced choirmaster, and he spares no trouble to make the singing as good as possible.

Mr. Walter Hughes (whose likeness accompanies this article), has for some years been organist of the chapel. He manipulates the organ in a brilliant and skilful manner, and is well known as a fine pianist. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music under Sir G. A. Macfarren. He is an Associate of the Royal College of Music, and is a Professor at the Metropolitan College of Music.

From 1872 to 1881 the Rev. William Park, now of Croydon, was the pastor. The Rev. Ossian Davies, who is now doing such excellent work at Bournemouth, succeeded him. During his ministry the congregation grew very much, and structural alterations had to be made to provide more sitting accommodation. On Mr. Davies' retirement in 1888, the Rev. William Pierce, the present esteemed pastor (who like his predecessor was trained at Brecon College), was appointed, and under his wise and energetic guidance the church is flourishing and doing much useful work in the neighbourhood.

Visiting New Court Chapel on a recent Sunday evening we were pleased to see a very large congregation, and we were glad to hear some good congregational singing. The service opened with a beautiful rendering by Mr. Hughes of an Andante movement by Sterndale Bennett. After Camidge's well known Sanctus in E flat had been sung as an introit, and prayer offered, Twell's hymn, "At even ere the sun was set," was sung to "Angelus." This tune at every church almost invariably goes heavily for some reason or other, and the dragging of the congregation at New Court was very noticeable. The choir and organist did their best to pull the people along but without effect. The expression marks, too, were not observed as carefully as they might have been, though throughout the rest of the service the greatest attention was paid to light and shade.

After the Scripture lesson, Bradbury's simple anthem, "We bow in Prayer," was given. This is a perfectly easy composition, and one that almost any congregation can readily learn. It was sung most tastefully and devotionally, and was indeed an excellent specimen of congregational singing.

The next hymn was Bickersteth's beautiful hymn, "Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?" which was of course sung to Caldbeck's appropriate tune Pax Tecum. We observed that in "giving out" the tune, Mr. Hughes did not play it exactly as it is written. His alterations were pleasing and tasteful, but we would suggest that in playing over, a tune should be played precisely as written, because in this preliminary hearing the people are supposed to follow, and if necessary learn their respective parts. We would also make a second suggestion in reference to the rendering of this hymn. The first line in each verse (except the last) is a query, the second line being in the nature of an answer. It would bring out the effect of this question and reply if a distinct break for a second or so was made by the voices and organ at the end of the first line in each verse. Further, a verse sung in unison or by

women's voices alone gives a welcome variety to the hymn.

Owing to ill-health the pastor was absent, but an excellent "supply" was found in the Rev. A. J. Palmer, of Folkestone, one of the most popular of our country ministers, Mr. Palmer's services are always in great demand even in the largest chapels of the denomination. His genial manner and kindly spirit endear him to all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance. As a preacher he is eloquent, forcible, and interesting. His text was taken from Luke i. 1, "Those things which are most surely believed among us," and for over half an hour he retained the closest attention of his large congregation, for they evidently thoroughly enjoyed his fine sermon.

During the offertory the choir alone sang hymn 623, as appropriate for Hospital Sunday.

The closing congregational hymn was "I heard the voice of Jesus say," to "Vox Dilecti." Everyone appeared to take part in the singing, and the tune went grandly, but it was taken a trifle slowly. Moreover we should like to have had a quicker tempo at the change of key at the beginning of the fifth line in every verse. Both words and music seem to demand it. And again another improvement would be effected if the commas (in the line "Stoop down, and drink, and live," for example) had been better observed. The sense of the words can be forcibly brought out by choir and organist by a close observance of punctuation marks.

After the Benediction, Mr. Hughes played the congregation out with a fine rendering of Handel's chorus, "Let their celestial concerts."

The congregational singing at New Court is good, but it might be better. We have already referred to the bad position of the organ and choir. Is it not possible to put the pulpit at one side of the arch, bring the organ forward, and seat the choir together where the pulpit now stands? With organist and choir close to each other, any unsteadiness would be avoided. Their power would be considerably increased and the dragging of the congregation would certainly be cured. We are convinced this arrangement would have the effect of greatly improving the service of praise. If at the same time the organ could be improved and be made really worthy of such a church, and of such an organist, so much the better. We commend these suggestions to the careful consideration of the church authorities.

There is a Choral Society connected with the church, consisting of about 150 members and conducted by Mr. Bound. Very successful oratorio concerts have been given by this Society in the church, when such eminent vocalists as Madame Patey, Mr. Santley, and Mr. Edward Lloyd have taken part.

From the *Church Manual* we learn that the church members number about nine hundred. From the same source we find that many institutions are in active operation under the auspices of the church, and from the cash account it is apparent that the people are generous. The influence of such a church is far reaching, and the blessings it brings to the neighbourhood none can tell.

CENTRAL GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL CHOIR UNION.

ON Wednesday, the 13th ult., the third annual Choral Festival of this Union took place at Bedford Street Chapel, Stroud. The choir, to the number of 200, took up a position in the galleries, with Mr. Franklin Higgs in the pulpit as conductor. The Festival proved most enjoyable. The singing, for the most part, was creditable. Perhaps the best efforts were Sir Arthur Sullivan's anthem, "O Love the Lord," E. J. Hopkins' anthem, "Lift up your heads," and the Magnificat by Bunnett in F. Several hymns were joined in by the congregation, and these were sung to the familiar tunes of Mainzer, Wittemberg, and Hursley. Mr. Martyn threw plenty of vigour into the rendering of Mendelssohn's recit. and air, "Lord God of Abraham." The other soloists were Miss Coster and Miss F. Ruegg. Two verses of a hymn were sung as a quartet by Miss Green, Mrs. Bloodworth, and Messrs. Cole and J. Jacob. The organ was played with discriminating taste by Miss Ruegg. The prayers were offered by the Revs. A. Cullen and A. Redshaw; the lessons were read by the Rev. E. J. H. Peach and W. J. Porter; and the sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Williams, B.A. Taking for his text the words of the Psalmist, "Praise is comely for the upright," he showed what provision a beneficent Creator has made for the gratification of the senses in man. There was so much of beauty in the world that God must be a lover of beauty. Everything He had made developed towards beauty. There was the gateway of the eye, through which the beautiful in shape in nature and art entered into the soul of man. Then there was the no less wonderful gateway of the ear, through which entered all that was enjoyable in harmony. The use of musical instruments commenced in the earliest ages of history, but it was not until of late that the element of beauty had been admitted into the worship of the Protestant Free Churches. Their forefathers cared little for it. Absorbed in the spiritual, they were forgetful of the fact that man had a body as well as a spirit, and that the inner part of his nature was influenced largely by the outer. Against music at that time congregations had conscientious scruples. As a rule singing was only allowed once in a service, and even then at the close, so that people might retire if they did not wish to hear the abominable thing. Now they knew that the hymnology of the Christian Church formed an important part of the priceless treasure of poetry. Nonconformists had had a large share in producing hymns of power and thought. The preacher mentioned that the act of chanting was going back to primitive times, and in proof of this alluded to David and his psalms of praise. Passing from the consideration of music to the organization with which many present were connected, he enforced the point that the members had a mission to fulfil. They must create a spirit of holy enthusiasm for improved music in their congregations. The richest spoils brought out of Egypt by the Israelites were poetry and music, and it was the duty of Christian people to use these gifts to the honour and glory of God.

THE competition for the Parepa Rosa Gold Medal took place at the Royal Academy of Music on Saturday, the 16th ult. The examiners were Mesdames Marian McKenzie, Charlotte Thudichum, and Anne Mudie Bolingbroke (in the chair). The prize was awarded to Gertrude Bevan, and the examiners highly commended Ada Kempton. The competition for the Leslie Crotty Prize took place on Monday, the 18th ult. The examiners were Messrs. Andrew Black, H. Plunket Greene, and W. H. Brereton (in the chair). The prize was awarded to T. Mewrig James, and the examiners highly commended David Jones.

Our Rising Singers.



MISS EMILY DAVIES.

FEW young soprano singers are more in request than Miss Emily Davies. Possessing an unusually strong and brilliant voice, and being in every respect a most reliable vocalist, her engagements are numerous, and call her to all parts of the country.

Though born in London, Miss Davies has Welsh blood in her veins, and like most Welsh people, she exhibited at an early age strong musical tendencies. She studied singing at the Royal College of Music under Mr. H. C. Deacon, and after his death under Mr. Henry Blower. She studied harmony under Dr. Glastone, pianoforte under Mr. Eaton Fanning, and declamation under Mrs. Stirling. Her course at the College covered a period of five years, during which time she gained an exhibition. For clear enunciation she also gained the London Musical Society's prize in 1889.

Miss Davies sang with great success in 1890 at the Cheltenham Musical Festival, taking part in Professor Bridge's *Repentance of Nineveh*. So pleased was the composer that he has often advised societies to offer Miss Davies an engagement in this work.

She has sung for the Festival Choral Societies of Worcester, Gloucester, Wolverhampton, and Bridgewater. She has also taken a leading part in the concerts of the Edinburgh Choral Union, Dundee Choral Society, Arbroath Choral Society, Stirling Choral Union, Shrewsbury Musical Society, and many other similar societies.

On Dr. Hubert Parry's recommendation she has several times taken the soprano solos in that composer's oratorio, *Judith*. By Dr. Villiers Stanford she has also been engaged in special works at Cambridge.

The soprano solos in *The Dream of Jubal* at the first performance in Edinburgh, under Dr. Mackenzie's conductorship, were taken by Miss Davies. She also undertook the same duty in "The Sleeping Beauty," at Middlesbrough, under Mr. F. H. Cowen.

Miss Davies includes all the well-known works (and many of the unknown ones also) in her repertoire. She knows perfectly over ninety works. Several times she has had a telegram in the early morning asking her to sing in oratorio in the north of England the same evening, a request she has been able to comply with.

The services of Miss Davies are sought long in advance. For instance, she has already booked several dates in Yorkshire in April next, and for the Festival on Christmas Day and Boxing Day at Dowlais. In October she is to be in Liverpool with Mr. Ben Davies and others.

Miss Davies is a true artiste. Her singing is most sympathetic, and she is able to fill the largest hall with ease. In oratorio or miscellaneous concerts she is equally at home. Few singers so quickly rouse an audience to enthusiasm, and with conductors her pleasant and obliging manners invariably make her a favourite. Wherever she appears once, she is certain to pay a second visit at no very distant date.

THE NONCONFORMIST CHOIR UNION.

PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

A PRIZE of five guineas is offered for the best anthem, three guineas for the best secular piece, and a prize of two guineas for the best hymn tune. Competitors must be an organist, choirmaster, or other member of a Nonconformist church or congregation. It is intended that the prize compositions shall be sung by the N.C.U. Choir at the Annual Festival at the Crystal Palace next year.

The anthem must be written in four parts, without solos. Unison passages allowed. It must be of a festival character, and must not take more than ten minutes in performance, preference being given to one suitable for ordinary church use.

The secular composition must be written in four parts, and not exceed six minutes in performance.

The selection of the hymn is left to the composer, but it must be non-copyright. Preference will be given to one of a Festival character.

The copyrights of the prize compositions shall be the property of the Nonconformist Choir Union.

The Committee reserve the right to withhold any of the prizes should the judge be of opinion that there is no composition of sufficient merit or suitability.

Each composition to be signed with a motto, the same to be written on a sealed envelope, which shall contain the name and address of the composer. Unsuccessful compositions will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent for the purpose.

Compositions must be delivered to the Hon. Sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, London, E.C., on or before September 1st.

The decision of the judge in all matters relating to the competitions shall be final.

ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESU'S NAME.

Prize Anthem

composed by

ERNEST H. SMITH F. R. C. O.

Published at 44 Fleet Street, London E.C.

Price 1½d.

Allegro moderato.

Soprano.
Alto.

Tenor.
Bass.

ORGAN.

f *rall.* *tempo*

And.

hail! All hail! All hail the power of Je - su's Name; Let

All hail! All hail! hail the power of

An - gels pros - trate fall; Bring forth! Bring forth! Bring

Bring forth! Bring forth!

forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And crown Him, Lord of all; All
the roy - al di - a - dem,

hail! All hail! All hail the power of Je - su's Name,
All hail! All hail!

Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And crown Him, Lord of all.

E. 38 M.

Sopranos. *p* *cresc.*

Crown Him, ye mar-tyrs of our God, Who from His al-tar

p Ch. *Sw.*

cresc. *f*

call; Ex - - tol the stem of Jes - se's rod, And

cresc. *f*

p

crown Him, Lord of all. Ye seed of Is - rael's

p

f

cho - sen race, Ye ran - son'd of the fall, Hail

Sw.

f

Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him, Lord of all.

Sw. (both hands)

Basses.

p Sinners whose love can ne'er for-get The worm-wood and the gall; Go, *mf*

p Gt. Soft Diap. *mf*

cresc. spread your tro-phies at His feet, And crown Him, and crown Him, and crown Him, Lord of

Full Swell. *cresc.* *f*

Sopranos.

all. Oh, that with yon-der sa-cred throng, We at His feet may

p Ch.

fall, There join the ev-er-last-ing song, And crown Him, Lord of

rit. *rit.*

all.

f tempo *> rall.*

f All hail! All hail! All hail the power of Je - su's Name, Let angels prostrate
All hail! All hail! hail the power

tempo

fall; Bring forth! Bring forth! Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And
Bring forth! Bring forth! the roy - al

crown Him, Lord of all, All hail! All hail! All hail the power of Je - su's Name;
All hail! All hail!

cresc. *ff.* Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, And crown Him, and crown Him, and crown Him, Lord of all. Let
ff. *ff.*

ev'-ry kindred, ev'-ry tribe, On this ter-res trial ball, To

rit. - *tempo*
Him all ma-jest-y as-cribe, And crown Him,

rit. - *tempo*
Trombe
Ed. Reeds.

rall.al Fine.
Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him,

rall.al Fine.

Lord of all.

ff *rall.* *sf* *sf*

The Nonconformist Choir Union Festival at the Crystal Palace.

[BY A SPECIAL REPORTER.]

THE wheel of time has turned its annual round once more, and it is my pleasant duty to chronicle an account of what took place at the sixth Festival of this firmly-established institution. It must be a very distinct encouragement to the promoters thereof to rejoice in the fact that whereas for the first Crystal Palace Festival there were issued some two thousand five hundred books of the music, it has been the delight of the worthy Secretary this year to send out no less than nearly six thousand copies of the music selected for 1894.

The following is a list of choirs who were supplied with books, viz. :—

LONDON.

Marylebone Presbyterian Church, Upper George Street, W.
Lordship Lane Baptist Chapel, S.E.
Walthamstow—Trinity Congregational, Orford Road.
Teddington—Baptist Church.
Bow—Harley Street Chapel.
Highbury Hill Baptist.
Kentish Town Congregational.
Junction Road Congregational Church, N.
Forest Gate—Woodgrange Baptist Chapel.
Burdett Road Congregational, E.
Dalston—Mayfield Road Wesleyan.
East Finchley Congregational Church.
North Bow Congregational.
Clapton—Downs Chapel.
Bible Christians, Waterloo Road, S.E.
Stoke Newington—Raleigh Memorial Church.
Bermondsey—Jamaica Road Congregational Church.
Tottenham—High Cross Congregational.
S. Norwood—Clifford Road Congregational.
Peckham—Clifton Congregational, S.E.
Peckham—Avondale Road Unitarian.
Stoke Newington Wesleyan Church.
Stoke Newington—Abney Congregational.
Unitarian Church, West Ham Lane.
Upper Holloway Baptist.
Bromley Baptist Chapel.
Craven Hill Congregational Church, Lancaster Gate, W.
Bromley Congregational Church.
Forest Hill—Sydenham Baptist Chapel.
Kentish Town—Hawley Road Chapel.
Islington—Unity Church.
Richmond—Duke Street Chapel.
Walworth—Browning Hall Congregational.
Poplar—Trinity Congregational Church.
Mission Choir (Mr. Minshall's).
Maryland Point—Trinity Presbyterian.
Congregational Church, Caledonian Road.
Hounslow Congregational Church.
City Temple, Holborn Viaduct.
Limehouse—Coverdale Chapel.
Bosworth Road Chapel, W.
Hackney—Old Gravel Pit Chapel.
Brixton—Unitarian Church.
Dulwich—Emmanuel Congregational Church, Barry Rd.
Highbury Quadrant Congregational.
Stoke Newington—Rectory Road Congregational.
Camden Town—Arlington Road Park Chapel.
Forest Gate Congregational, E.
Tottenham Wesleyan Church.
Stockwell Baptist Chapel, S. Lambeth Road.
Balham Congregational Church.

PROVINCIAL.

Hyde—Methodist New Connexion, Newton Moor.

Hyde—Wesleyan Chapel, Norfolk Street.
Whitworth Chapel, near Rochdale.
Hyde—Union Street Chapel.
Ilkley—Congregational Church.
Rochdale—New Methodist Free Church, Spotland.
Hollingworth—Methodist New Connexion.
Hyde—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Liverpool—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Hyde—Zion Congregational Church.
Rochester—Vines Congregational Church.
Royton—Congregational Church.
Middlesboro'—Queen's Terrace Congregational Church.
Otley—Congregational Church.
Hereford—Eignbrook Congregational Church.
Blackpool—Union Baptist.
Ringstead—Baptist and Wesleyan.
Ruabon—Congregational Church.
Bolton—St. George's Road Congregational.
Haslingden—Trinity Baptist Chapel.
Bedford—Bunyan Meeting.
Rochdale—Shawclough New Methodist Free Church.
Hyde—Methodist New Connexion, George Street.
Oldham—Methodist Free Church, King Street.
Burnley—Wesleyan Chapel, Accrington.
Bolton—Congregational Church, Mawdsley Street.
Dukinfield—Congregational Church.
Oldham—Pitt Street Baptist.
Dover—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Bishop's Stortford—Congregational Church.
Rushden—Old Baptist Chapel.
Amphill—Union Chapel.
Irthlingborough—Wesleyan Church.
Maulden—Union Chapel.
Oswestry—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Coventry—Congregational Churches.
Burton-on-Trent—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Thrapston—Baptist Chapel.
Denford—Wesleyan Methodist.
Matlock-Bath—Congregational Church.
Waterhead—Congregational Church.
Bournemouth—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Heywood—Primitive Methodist Chapel.
Chesterfield—Brampton Congregational Church.
Denton, near Manchester—Hope Congregational Church.
Blackpool—Victoria Street Congregational.
Tunbridge Wells—Baptist Tabernacle.
Sandy, Beds—Baptist Chapel.
Burley-in-Wharfedale—Salem Congregational.
Walsall—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Kislingbury, Northampton—Baptist Chapel.
Bingley—Morton Congregational Church.
Bingley—Congregational Church.
Sale—Congregational Church.
Rochdale—Baptist Chapel Sunday School.
Tonbridge—Wesleyan Chapel.
Addingham, Leeds—Wesleyan Chapel.
Stockport—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Blackpool—Adelaide Street Wesleyan Chapel.
Cheltenham—Highbury Congregational Church.
Stockport—Congregational Church, Wellington Road.
Higham Ferrers—Wesleyan Church.
Oldham—King Street Baptist Chapel.
Wellingboro'—Congregational Church.
Addingham, nr. Leeds—Mount Heron Chapel.
Kettering—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Gee Cross—Hyde Chapel Sunday School.
Tunbridge Wells—Mount Pleasant Congregational Church.
Sudbury, Suffolk—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Nottingham—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Wednesbury—Baptist Chapel.
Oldham—Moravian Chapel.
Ipswich—Nonconformist Choir Union.
St. Neots—Nonconformist Choir Union.
Oldham—Nonconformist Choir Union.

Royston—Congregational Church.
 Blackpool—Adelaide Street New Meth. Free Church.
 Rochdale—Mitchell Street New Meth. Free Church.
 Brighton—Nonconformist Choir Union.
 Otley, Yorks—Primitive Methodist Chapel.
 Warrington—Wycliffe Congregational Church.
 Weston-Rhyn, Ruabon—Nonconformist Choir Union.
 Petersfield—Nonconformist Choir Union.
 Northampton—Nonconformist Choir Union.
 Coventry—West Orchard Congregational.
 Leamington Spa—Nonconformist Choir Union.
 Folkestone—Nonconformist Choir Union.

The enthusiasm on the part of the London Choirs is perhaps not so great proportionately as is to be found amongst our country cousins, nevertheless there was a fine muster at the final rehearsal which took place at Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury, on the Tuesday prior to the Festival, when the great body of tone issuing from the throats of a thousand choristers well nigh lifted the flat roof of the building high in the air.

It is highly gratifying to notice the many local unions and festivals which are continually being inaugurated in the various large provincial centres. At Liverpool, for instance, I am pleased to hear they have this year formed a branch of the N.C.U., and already have some six hundred choristers to support it; their intention is to hold a festival on a large scale in St. George's Hall, next autumn. Very few of the choirs are able to come to London for the Palace Festival, and it is just as well, perhaps, that all who purchase the books of music do not come. Were they so to do the orchestra would require just a little enlargement. Hence the N.C.U. influence by no means stops short at the Palace Festival. Who can say that in the near future Glasgow or Edinburgh may not be holding a giant festival under its far-reaching influence? To belong to the Union it is not at all necessary to attend the Metropolitan festival, and I do not doubt but that the energetic Secretary would just as soon superintend the sending out of twenty thousand books as six thousand.

The N.C.U. Festival has now become quite a stock event in the season's programme at the Crystal Palace, and it makes a fine lead off to the increasing number of choral gatherings which muster annually on the world's greatest orchestra. Illustrative of the large amount of enthusiasm shown towards the movement by the country choirs, may be mentioned the fact that some two thousand members travel most of the night before and after the Festival day. To know what this trying ordeal means it must be experienced—but then, Northerners are so full of vigour! There must also be a host of visitors anxious to get up to town for the great event, seeing that Messrs. Cook and Sons, to say nothing of other excursion agents, find it to their advantage to run twenty-five or thirty excursion trains from various parts of the country. Unmusical as some of our foreign friends regard us, I venture to think no other nation can hold up any more striking example of musical activity amongst the masses than these monster summer gatherings at Sydenham.

Saturday, June 9th, was a day eminently agreeable in point of weather for such an occasion. Sunshine is of course very delightful when strolling through the grounds at the Palace, but a substantial layer of clouds 'twixt the summer sun and the glass roof of the central transept makes singing in the midst of a crowd of four thousand choristers a far greater enjoyment than otherwise, and much more comfortable than last year, when one good friend of mine occupied most of his time during the concert by ministering to the wants of the many ladies who were carried off the orchestra in a fainting condition.

Coming now to the actual programme, I have in the first place to speak of the competition, which in spite of the very small number of entries gives cause for no

small degree of satisfaction, judging from the merit shown by each choir which came up for the exhibition of their talent. Punctually at two o'clock Mr. Croger appeared on the concert-room platform ready to superintend the competition. Up went the card announcing the choir from East Finchley Congregational Church, who forthwith formed into line under the able direction of their respected chief Mr. Ernest W. E. Blandford (the treasurer of the Union). This was the first entry under class B, choirs for not more than twenty-four voices. The anthem chosen by the committee for the test was "The Sun shall be no more thy light by day" (Woodward) which received a very careful and effective reading under Mr. Blandford's baton, as also did the part-song which followed, "Break, break, break on thy cold grey stones, O sea" (Macfarren). The singing of this choir was tasteful and refined; their enunciation, too, was very distinct, altogether exhibiting their conductor's ability in a highly satisfactory way. Next came Tonbridge Wesleyan, who received a hearty greeting, owing no doubt to their success of last year. Mr. George J. Kimmins, A.R.C.O., was their conductor as before. As the result of his work some smart singing was revealed to the delight of the large audience by that time assembled, who were not slow in recognising the good quality of their efforts. The part-song which they chose was "Away to the forest" (Abt). This was followed by the appearance of Liscard (Cheshire) Congregational, which only mustered about eighteen voices, but though in number much smaller than their confederates they were quite equal to the occasion in point of tone, the basses being well to the fore in this respect. Their rendering of the anthem was very creditable, especially the *pp* portion at the finish. Following this they ably gave "The silent tide" (Pinsuti). The last of the four competing choirs then entered the fray, coming from Denton in Lancashire, and although they had travelled all night and were unfortunate enough to miss their train at Ludgate Hill, they managed to arouse great enthusiasm from the audience by their hearty and vigorous singing; there was a true Lancashire ring in the voices, also feeling and unction in their singing, to which all listened with great delight. Although they were not successful in winning the prize they must have felt in some measure recompensed for their labours by the loud and prolonged applause to which they were treated at the close of the part-song "In this Hour" (Pinsuti). As the result a verdict was given in favour of Tonbridge Wesleyan (Liscard choir being a close second) by Messrs. L. C. Venables, F. G. Edwards and Josiah Booth, who again kindly acted as adjudicators. In class A there was only one entry, namely Emmanuel Congregational, Dulwich, who carried off the Banner last year. The committee therefore decided to allow them to retain Mrs. Minshall's banner and let it count as a second win under the circumstances. It is to be regretted, however, that there were so few entries for these competitions, and I would urge choirmasters not to be so frightened another year in bringing up their forces to the battle.

By half-past three the singers were swarming upon the orchestra, and crowds of visitors thronged the Palace. The raised tier of chairs in front of the Royal boxes already erected for the Handel Festival were soon filled; these seats were eagerly sought after, commanding as they did such a fine view of the vocal army. At four o'clock there were few vacant seats to be found in the choir, just a corner at the tenor side was the only place unoccupied, so that it may safely be assumed that the number of voices was far in excess of previous years. Presently a hearty round of applause heralds the approach of the commander-in-chief, Mr. Minshall, as he advanced towards the conductor's seat. There was no special choir this year to grace the front of the platform by their presence, consequently the front of the

orchestra looked rather bare in comparison with previous festivals. Mr. Minshall's baton is raised, and promptly the choral forces await the signal for a start as the organist gives out the tune of the first item in the book, which is the ever popular chant "The strain upraise." This is the first time a chant has appeared on the programme at these gatherings, much interest is therefore centred on the innovation. No more suitable words could have been chosen for opening such a concert than

"The strain upraise of joy and praise, Alleluia!
To the glory of their King shall the ransomed people sing,
Alleluia!"

A grand "strain of praise" it surely was throughout! Here and there perhaps the reading was hardly steady, but with such a crowd it was scarcely to be expected that all should recite the words exactly together. The clever organist, Mr. Arthur Briscoe (Highbury Quadrant Church), missed no point for effect in helping the choir to give due significance to "Ye clouds that onward sweep," "Ye thunders echoing loud and deep," "First let the birds with painted plumage gay," etc., etc. Arriving at the unison passage "Now from all men be outpoured" a huge volume of tone was given forth from choir and organ, to the delight and inspiration of the crowd of listeners. Altogether the chant was a distinct success, and it is to be hoped still better things may be heard in this direction next year.

Sir Jos. Barnby's Easter Anthem, "Break forth into joy," came next, and well suited the four thousand songsters, who entered into its spirit with right joyful intent. The fifteen hundred sopranos told out in brilliant fashion "For the Lord hath comforted His people," and the tenors rang out their F sharps splendidly in "He hath redeemed Jerusalem." Most effective, too, were the thousand basses, who asserted themselves with diapason tones in "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm." If one part showed any sign of weakness in volume it was the contraltos, who were perhaps hardly equal in strength to the other sections; nevertheless they were in goodly array and sang well. The unison treble forte passage towards the close of the anthem was rendered with all possible force, and led up in grand form to the Easter hymn which concludes this bright and cheerful anthem. By this time the singers have warmed up to their work and are eager for the great test chorus, "Be not afraid" (Elijah), which in spite of many fears to the contrary was gone through in very commendable style, considering the intricate nature of the fugal portion, which is by no means easy, especially for so large a body of voices. Enough that no serious mishap occurred, and the difficult part of the fine chorus being well over, the concluding pages were given with much vigour; the sopranos sent out their top G's with thrilling effect, and all did their best at the broad passage which so nobly closes a chorus full of the highest inspiration.

A few minutes' rest is afforded the choristers at this point, the while Mr. August Manns, who is heartily greeted, directs his famous band through the overture to *Athalie* (Mendelssohn). An excellent performance of course results, but after such a mighty volume of tone from the chorus the small band sounds weak, and leads one to hope that another year it may be found convenient to tack on the military band to the orchestral, as is sometimes done on special occasions at the Palace.

A beautiful unaccompanied anthem follows, viz., "Lighten our darkness" (Vicars), which shows that the choristers are quite able to hold their own without the aid of the organ. A very careful and expressive rendering delighted one's critical fancy. Marks of *dim.* and *cres.* were well noted, though it was perhaps possible to have gained a trifle more softness in some places.

Following this came Mr. Charles M. Hudson's anthem "I will extol Thee," which gained the prize offered by the Union last year. The setting of the well-known verses in Psalm cxlv. was suitable for the occasion and easy to sing. Mr. Hudson is choirmaster at Stockwell Baptist Church (Rev. Arthur Mursell's), and no doubt he was pleased with the excellent treatment accorded to his composition.

Mr. Fred. W. Noakes then treated the assembly to an organ solo, "Overture in F Minor" (Morandi), in which he displayed talents which gained for him the prolonged applause of an audience who were not slow to appreciate the easy and brilliant style in which he mastered the huge instrument. The two anthems which followed were "Hearken unto Me, My People" (Sullivan); and "Sing unto the Lord" (Sydenham), two great favourites amongst church musicians. Both were rendered with that enthusiasm and "go" which betokened a great liking for these excellent compositions on the part of the whole army of exponents. The concluding "Amen" in the latter was perhaps the grandest outburst of praise ever sent forth by the Non-conformist Choir Union, and well closed the first part of the programme.

The Palace orchestra next gave "Three Dances from Henry VIII." (E. German), which were charmingly played, causing intense delight to the choristers, who doubtless would have liked to dance to the bewitching strains. After so many anthems, which, however grand, were getting a trifle monotonous, it was somewhat refreshing to hear that weather-beaten old glee, "Strike the Lyre" (Cooke). It was good to hear the fine old glee sung by such a crowd; were it not that the choir was so ponderous, Mr. Minshall might possibly have taken the latter movement a trifle quicker, and thus secured a little more "animato" and fire, otherwise the vocalists sailed through the ordeal bravely.

"Presentation of prizes" was the next selection, which meant glory for the Tonbridge Wesleyan Choir, whose chief had the joy of receiving a prize of five guineas from the Union (and a baton from Mr. Croger), on behalf of his choir, who thoroughly deserved such a gift. Under Mr. Kimmins' direction, they again rendered the part-song "Away to the Forest," with all due effect. Mr. Berridge's pretty part-song "Go, lovely Rose!" which gained the N.C.U. prize, is of distinct merit, and well deserved a place in such a programme. Evidently it was a favourite amongst the singers, who treated it to a capital rendering.

The "A" class prize choir then came forward to take the prize banner and to sing a part song, "The sea hath its Pearls" (Pinsuti); Mr. J. W. Lewis conducted the performance, which left an impression that such singing would not be easily surpassed.

The remaining items in the programme were as follows:—"The Bell's of St. Michael's Tower" (Stewart); "Forth to the Meadows" (Schubert); orchestral selection—"Hungarian March from Faust" (Berlioz); "Summer's Good-bye" (Collingwood Banks); and "A Psalm of Life" (Kinross).

In the first named, the basses had to be divided, which may have caused the unsteadiness apparent concerning the doings of a certain Richard Penlake of St. Michael's tower fame, albeit the fine old bells of this ancient edifice never rang out more merrily than on this occasion. "Forth to the Meadows" was daintily sung and prettily played. "A Psalm of Life" was a good selection wherewith to finish; the first portion is certainly rather gloomy in character, and the basses were hardly equal to giving necessary effect to the "muffled drums," inasmuch as most of them were baritone—the second portion, however, was bright and cheerful in tone and sentiment.

Mr. Minshall conducted throughout with much thought and care; his beat is always broad and steady.

and gives the rank and file little chance of getting "out of step" in their journeyings through the programme.

Last, but not least, a word of praise is due to the organist, Mr. Arthur Briscoe, whose clever accompaniments revealed skill of a high order of merit. It is not an easy task to gain the mastery over such a huge and somewhat awkwardly arranged instrument as the Crystal Palace organ; let it therefore stand to his credit that Mr. Briscoe scored well in his arduous duties for a second time.

It was rather surprising to find that there was no Handel Chorus in this year's book of music—why this slight upon the grand old master? is it owing to his "grand old robbery" which Mr. Prout talks about? Anyway, such an omission should not occur again on the Handel Orchestra.

At the time of writing this notice, I am not in possession of the actual figures concerning this year's attendance; certain it is, however, that the choir must have numbered some hundreds in excess of previous years, and so too the audience, which presented a fine spectacle. Thus the N.C.U. is "still achieving, still pursuing," the while its officers "learn to labour and to wait."

The N.C.U. Choral Competition.

EXPERIENCES OF A COMPETING CHOIR.

WE start for the Palace at 8.36 a.m. from Tonbridge, about twenty-five in number, hope and fear alternating in every breast and anxiety depicted on the countenances of not a few. Over night the rehearsal had gone fairly well, but would our efforts satisfy the three grave and impartial gentlemen who would submit us to a keen analysis at the hour of competition? That was the question none of us could answer, not even Mr. Kimmins, our talented conductor; anxious as he was to keep our nerves strong and our heads cool and free from excitement.

He had looked very grave when, at a previous practice, we had sung out of tune and finished about half a tone down in pitch, and had reminded us in solemn tones that should we repeat such conduct on the 9th of June the prize would not be taken by the Tonbridge Wesleyan Choir. But, then, whoever heard of a perfectly satisfied conductor? The musical world has not been able yet to boast of such a treasure, and will no doubt remain powerless to do so till the advent of the millennium.

The hour of competition being fixed for two p.m., of course dinner must be partaken of previously. Here was a difficulty. At what hour should the choir dine, and what would be the diet best suited to its vocal organs? were the queries put to the conductor, who in reply advised an early and light dinner. All his singers loyally accepted the first adjective, while more than one demurred to the second; but, with true heroism, all, or nearly so, resolved to waive their gastronomic proclivities for once and sacrifice appetite at the shrine of Apollo.

There was a touch of irony in our unaccompanied part-song, "Away to the forest, away from the din, away from the cares of life." To sing those joyous, rollicking sentences over and over again, always with those three solemn faces and a critical audience haunting the brain, to put it mildly, certainly bordered on the sarcastic; but a truce to complaining, for we are now at the scene of action, or rather some of us, for a few have wandered to St. Paul's to seek inspiration from the silvery voices of the choristers. But now we are under the glass dome of the Palace, and all have

dined—no, not quite all—one gentleman, a tenor, is gloomily partaking of cold roast beef to a heavy accompaniment of new bread, his mind filled with vague misgivings as to whether those viands by the wildest stretch of imagination could be included in the category of light refreshment.

Two p.m. has come at last, and we are assembled outside the concert-room on the terrace overlooking the beautiful grounds of the people's palace. All are more or less excited, those more so than the rest, to the amusement of the calmer ones, taking upon themselves to advise perfect coolness under the circumstances of the hour. Some endeavour to assume an air of *sang froid*, but in vain—the almost supernatural calmness of their exterior betrays the storm within. At length we enter the concert-room which is to be the scene either of our defeat or victory. Yes, there are the three judges who will decide our fate, but not looking so severe after all, and the audience applauds sympathetically. In another moment we are singing Woodward's beautiful anthem, "The sun shall be no more," the cadence rising and falling like the hopes and fears of the singers.

And now for "Away to the forest, away from the cares of life," delightful sentiments, but what more concerns us is to know if that ominous-looking fork in the hand of Mr. Josiah Booth will tell him in confidence that we have not fallen in pitch. Trusting it may be so, we mingle with the audience to criticise the efforts of our rivals. At this moment the voice of our conductor is heard exclaiming, *sotto voce*, "I have heard you sing better; I was not satisfied with your crescendos," as if it were likely he ever would be. Now the voices of the last choir die away, the audience disperses to secure seats for the grand concert, but two or three of us linger behind with the East Finchley choir to hear the award given by the judges. The paper in which we are all so much interested is at last handed to the genial secretary, Mr. Croger. We catch the words, "Tonbridge Wesleyan Choir." Hurrah! we have won. Now to the telegraph-office, and to congratulate our comrades on this our second victory. But our work is not yet over; the concert follows, and with light hearts, we join the 4,000 singers filling the fine Handel Orchestra.

And now once more we sing "Away to the forest," and now we can enjoy the breezy refreshing words of the song, away from the cares of time and pitch, light dinners, and judges, and when the cheque and gold-mounted baton are presented to our popular conductor, we feel amply repaid for all the time and trouble expended in preparation, and already anticipate next year's contest. May we be as successful then as now, but win or lose, we will do our best, recognising as we do that the practices and training are highly beneficial in their effects upon the discipline and efficiency of the choir. We are deeply indebted to the committee and officials of the N. Choir Union for having instituted this great meeting of the choirs once a year, in which honourable rivalry and harmonious intercourse are fostered and encouraged, and we join with our fellow-singers in the country in wishing this great and laudable enterprise a long and prosperous career.

WESLEY SMITH, Tonbridge.

In connection with the London College of Music, Scholarships have just been awarded to Catherine Allen and Florence Louise Moody for pianoforte playing, also Exhibitions to Ethel J. Renwick for pianoforte, F. M. Barrett for singing, and Charles P. Knight for harmony and counterpoint. The judges were Dr. Walter H. Sangster (in the chair), Dr. F. J. Karn, and Mr. A. J. Caldicott, Mus. Bac. Cantab.

THE LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL CHOIR.

THE twenty-second annual festival of this very prosperous and useful institution took place at the Crystal Palace on Wednesday, the 13th ult., and from beginning to end passed off most successfully.

A juvenile concert was given by 5,000 singers at one o'clock, and the singing of these little folks was most pleasing. Mr. J. Rowley conducted, and Mr. Horace G. Holmes presided at the organ.

In the afternoon the orchestra was again well filled with 4,000 singers of older growth, when an excellent programme was very creditably performed under the able conductorship of Mr. Luther Hinton. Besides several hymns sung to well-known tunes, the selection included such pieces as "Blessed are the men" (Mendelssohn); "No shadows Yonder" (Gaul); "Come unto Me" (Warwick Jordan); "It is High Time to Awake" (Barnby); "The Fisherman's Good Night" (Bishop); "Hark! the Angelus" (Gaul); "Eldorado" (Pinsuti); "Hail to the Chief" (Prout). These were all sung with much precision and expression. *Encores* were loudly demanded for several of them, but Dr. Warwick Jordan's very effective anthem was the only one given a second time, when it was conducted by the composer, who received an ovation from the choir and audience.

Mr. David Davies accompanied on the organ as usual, and helped in no small degree to the success of the concert. We regret to know that Mr. Davies has had to relinquish part of his professional work owing to ill-health. His many friends will heartily sympathise with him, and earnestly hope he may speedily be restored to his accustomed vigour.

The band of the Sunday School Choir, assisted by the Crystal Palace orchestra, played during the concert several selections in good style, conducted by Mr. David M. Davis.

The audiences at both concerts were very large and enthusiastic.

ROCHESTER AND CHATHAM SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION EISTEDDFOD.

ON Tuesday and Wednesday, May 22nd and 23rd, the first Eisteddfod of this Union was held. Competitions in various subjects took place, the entries being satisfactory. On the first day the programme included recitations by scholars under eleven years of age; between eleven and thirteen years, and over thirteen but under fifteen years of age; pianoforte solos by scholars under fifteen and also for those above that age; violin solos by scholars under fifteen years of age; vocal solos for scholars under twelve years, and over twelve but under fifteen years; also vocal solos (soprano, contralto, tenor and bass), by teachers or adult scholars. Contests between Sunday School choirs and also between Church choirs took up most part of the proceedings of the second day. In the Sunday School choir competition four choirs entered, viz.: the New Brompton Wesleyan choir, conducted by Mr. A. E. Avery; Vines Congregational Schools, Rochester, conducted by Miss Lucie Weaver; Best Street Zion Baptist School, Chatham, conducted by Mr. Howard; and the New Brompton Baptist Schools, under the conductorship of Mr. Joseph Casse. The test piece was Dr. Garrett's anthem, "The Lord is loving unto every man." The first prize was awarded to New Brompton Choir, and the second prize to the New Brompton Baptist Choir, the third prize being given to Vines Congregational Schools. The Church Choir contest excited great interest. The test piece was Gaul's "Silent Land" with the option of taking a sight singing test and also a piece of the choir's own selection.

Five choirs entered, and the prizes were awarded as follows: 1. Vines Congregational, Rochester, (Miss May Terry, conductor); 2. Ebenezer Congregational, Chatham, (Mr. E. J. Bishop, conductor); 3. Garrison Wesleyan Church, Old Brompton, (Mr. A. E. Watchurst, conductor).

Mr. Alfred H. Miles adjudicated on the recitation, and Mr. Josiah Booth on the musical competitions.

miniatures.

VICTORIA STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BLACKPOOL.

THIS is the leading Nonconformist church in Blackpool, and it is invariably filled. During the summer season it is crowded, and an enlargement of the building would seem to be a necessity in the near future. The pastor, the Rev. W. Evans (who succeeded the Rev. James Wayman, a few years ago) is, like most Welshmen, a popular preacher. He is eloquent, interesting, and practical. The music is decidedly good. The choir sit in a gallery at the back of the pulpit, near the organ, and they sing with spirit and much intelligence. The hymn-singing is particularly hearty, the congregation joining with great vigour. The chanting might be improved, the pointing of the psalter now in use being unsatisfactory. The organ, a three manual instrument, contains about thirty stops, but the quality is not first class. The Organist, Mr. Albert Scholes, plays with much taste and style, his voluntaries being very carefully performed. He might with advantage give rather more organ in accompanying the hymns. A further suggestion we would make is, that a distinct stop between the verses of the hymns would probably secure a better attack. At present the congregation seem a little doubtful when to begin each verse. Mr. Bancroft is the energetic choir master. Congregationalism seems to flourish in this popular Lancashire seaside resort.

VICTORIA STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, DERBY

It happened on a recent Sunday that we were compelled to take a journey which occasioned a wait of two hours at Derby, and whilst strolling up the main thoroughfare our eyes rested on a placard announcing Dr. Newman Hall to preach at Victoria Street Congregational Church. A little later and the church came in sight. Entering therein we soon observed the veteran preacher seated in the pulpit of an unusually fine provincial church, while a choir of no ordinary merit were giving an excellent rendering of the anthem, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord" (Tours). The congregation completely filled the handsome building both by their presence, and by their voices as they joined heartily in the hymn which followed. The music seemed to be so good that we felt compelled to remain awhile after the service concluded. When the bulk of the worshippers had slowly filed out and the organist had completed a masterly rendering of a well-known voluntary, we made our way to the organ loft there to make the acquaintance of Mr. A. W. Fletcher who, we were pleased to learn, had held the post of organist for

twenty years. A very interesting conversation ensued during which we discovered that under Mr. Fletcher's able direction the choir of about thirty voices are in the habit of performing some first class music, and must certainly occupy a very high position in Derby musical circles. Some three years ago, we learned, they were successful in winning the first prize at a large choral competition at the Royal Drill Hall. During the winter months much good work is gratuitously done on behalf of local charities, and the numerous engagements exact a great amount of time and care from the members *Bravissimo!* We were rather surprised, however, to find that a town like Derby is as yet not represented in the Nonconformist Choir Union. Surely their attachment should prove of much advantage to the many choirs in the town, so we strongly urged Mr. Fletcher to take the matter up and follow in the wake of Liverpool, Nottingham, etc., who are arranging local festivals on an extensive scale. It ought to be an easy matter for Derby to muster a choir of four or five hundred members. Our impromptu visit to Victoria Street Church was a distinct pleasure, and we trust these "miniature" remarks may not have been written in vain.

Church Music in the Shetland Archipelago.

THOSE who have read Sir Walter Scott's novel, "The Pirate," will have learned a great deal about the archipelago of Shetland, but Scott omitted to say anything about the church music, even if there was any in his day. Some news, therefore, of the music of the churches in these northern regions may be of interest to the readers of the NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

The people of Zetland live under the protection of a Norse saint, eat haggis, and talk English. Lerwick, the chief town on the mainland, is about 180 miles north of Aberdeen, and is on a parallel with Bergen in Norway, about 180 miles west. Their folk-lore is Scandinavian, and many of their expressions are perfectly understandable by a Norseman. The natives pride themselves on their descent from the old Viking stock; and further, they trace Queen Victoria from Jarl Rognvald, first Earl of Orkney, thirty-first in descent; by the same process they find Her Majesty twenty-seventh in descent from King Harold Haarfager (Harold Fairhair) of Norway, and twenty-third from King Olaf, also of Norway.

The islands are very barren in the matter of trees and shrubs, owing to the sweeping sea blast, but in some parts fair crops of cereals are obtained. The chief part of the inhabitants live by fishing. The women of the peasantry, who are known as "knitters," carry peat to the town, knitting as they go. The town is Commercial Street, and Commercial Street is the town—consisting of a thoroughfare of that strange higgledy-piggledy formation common to the west coast of Norway. There is no roadway as we understand it. The houses are just built anyhow, some stand forward, and some stand back. There is quite a space at parts, while at others it is possible to shake hands across the

streets. The space between the houses is paved with flagstones, and vehicles (what few there are) have to rumble over the pavement.

The spiritual needs of the people are well cared for, there being seven churches of different denominations, besides the Salvation Army and Plymouth Brethren.

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland has one large and commodious building, resembling the typical Methodist Chapel in Yorkshire, and capable of seating 1,500 or 2,000 people. In the church is a small one-manual organ, which has the appearance of having been altered, and spoilt by the addition of pedal pipes much too heavy for the rest of the instrument. Mr. Thomas Manson, a very capable musician, wrestles Sunday after Sunday with this monster, hoping and praying for the time when he shall get a new one. The choir, numbering about thirty, are placed behind the pulpit and on either side of the organ. They use the Scottish Hymnal, but, alas! they only sing from it twice in each service. They do not attempt an anthem, but sing the paraphrase to a chant.

The Free Kirk is a fairly large building, and is well attended, but of course they have not the soul destroying "Kist o' Whistles." However, they have an American organ, and have thereby given away the principle of admitting instrumental music.

The United Presbyterian Church is the next in importance, and they possess undoubtedly the handsomest and most churchlike building in Lerwick, or even in Shetland. It is cruciform, with a square tower in the centre. This church possesses a very nice two-manual organ. The organist is a lady whose playing would put to shame many professionals both in point of technique, perfect taste in registration, and in choice of music. The choir—well, they *looked* very nice, but one could not hear much of them.

The Congregationalists have a very cosy little building, built in 1820, and enlarged in 1840. It has just undergone further enlargement in the shape of an apse at one end (very suitable, by the way, for a small organ, which we will hope may be placed there), and a hall at the other.

The Baptists have a small chapel, which was built in 1824. The music we will leave till a future paper; sufficient to say, there is a harmonium, and a tenor who will be heard.

The Wesleyan Methodists have a nice chapel seating 500 people, a pipe organ, and good hearty singing characterises their services.

There is a pretty little Episcopal Church, attended by the officers of the gunboat and a few English tourists; but the authorities take more pride and interest in tracing the succession of their bishops from St. Paul than in matters musical, albeit they have a small two-manual organ containing thirteen or fourteen stops.

The Salvation Army hold their services in the finest building in the place—the Town Hall. This hall contains over a thousand pounds' worth of stained-glass windows, presented by various donors—individuals, fishing companies, etc., in all parts of Europe. In the court-room are two windows, one from a company in Holland, and the other from a similar company in

Hamburg. In the large Hall the designs are all to the honour and glory of their Scandinavian ancestors, beginning with the landing of King Harold Haarfager in Zetland—or Hjalmland, as the natives delight to call it—in 870; and ending with a brass tablet, set up last year in memory of a native named Arthur Laurencen, who was, amongst other things, "an exponent of Scandinavian literature;" around this tablet is a mysterious-looking inscription in runic characters.

Salloway, the ancient capital on the west side of the island, has a population of 600, and four churches to minister to them.

A. B.

Nonconformist Church Organs.

WESLEYAN CHURCH, MORNINGTON ROAD, SOUTHPORT.

Built by Messrs. W. Hill and Son.

<i>Great Organ.</i>				Feet.
Double Open Diapason, .. .. .	..	..	..	16
Open Diapason (large) .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Open Diapason (small) .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Viola .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Hohl Flöte .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Principal .. .. .	..	..	..	4
Harmonic Flute .. .. .	..	..	..	4
Octave quint .. .. .	..	..	..	2 ³ / ₄
Fifteenth .. .. .	..	..	..	2
Mixture .. .. .	..	..	..	3 Ranks
Posaune .. .. .	..	..	..	8

<i>Swell Organ.</i>				
Bourdon .. .. .	..	..	..	16
Open Diapason .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Hohl Flöte .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Æoline .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Vox Angelica .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Principal .. .. .	..	..	..	4
Suabe Flöte .. .. .	..	..	..	4
Harmonic Flute .. .. .	..	..	..	2
Mixture .. .. .	..	..	..	3 Ranks
Contra Fagotto .. .. .	..	..	..	16
Horn .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Oboe .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Clarion .. .. .	..	..	..	4
Tremulant .. .. .	..	..	..

<i>Choir Organ.</i>				
Violin Diapason .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Dulciana .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Gedacht .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Lieblich Flöte .. .. .	..	..	..	4
Flautina .. .. .	..	..	..	2
Clarionet .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Orchestral Oboe .. .. .	..	..	..	8

(Lieblich, Clarionet, and Orchestral Oboe in a separate box.)

<i>Solo and Echo Organ.</i>				
Viole d'amour .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Echo Cornet .. .. .	..	..	..	5 ranks
Cors Anglais .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Vox Humana .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Tuba Mirabilis .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Tremulant .. .. .	..	..	..

(First four in separate swell.)

<i>Pedal Organ.</i>				
Open Diapason .. .. .	..	..	..	16
Bourdon .. .. .	..	..	..	16
Violine .. .. .	..	..	..	16
Violoncello .. .. .	..	..	..	8
Trombone .. .. .	..	..	..	16

Couplers.

Swell to Great.	Solo Octave.
Swell to Octave.	Great to Pedal.
Swell to Sub-Octave.	Swell to Pedal.
Swell to Choir.	Choir to Pedal.
Solo to Great.	Solo to Pedal.

Combination Pistons.

Four to Great.	Four to Swell.
Two to Choir.	

Combination Pedals.

Four to Great and Pedal.	Two to Pedal.
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Commutation Pedals.

Swell to Great.	Swell Tremulant Pedal.
Great to Pedal.	Echo Tremulant Pedal.
Solo to Great.	General Swell Pedal.
Solo Pedal.	Choir Swell Pedal.
	Echo Swell Pedal.

The hydraulic engines, horizontal feeders, and regulating reservoirs, are erected in an insulated chamber, 36ft. long, in the basement, and the wind is carried through the vestibule in zinc trunks to six reservoirs in the organ, which supply the various pressures required, from three to ten inches.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

GOSPEL OAK.—The monthly Sunday evening "People's" services at the Congregational Church, in which music is a special feature, are proving very successful, and attracting largely increased congregations. On Sunday, May 27th, a complete cantata, *The Heavenly Shepherd* (C. Darnton), was sung by the choir, the composer taking the organ. In the absence of the pastor (Rev. H. Le Pla), Rev. James Le Pla gave the brief readings and a very suitable address; the congregation joining in two or three popular hymns.

PROVINCIAL.

BURTON-ON-TRENT.—On Wednesday, May 23rd, Mr. E. Minshall gave an Organ Recital in the Primitive Methodist Chapel. Mrs. Mander, of Derby, and Mr. J. Phillips, were the vocalists, the singing of both meeting with much acceptance. There was a large audience.

OLDHAM.—The organ in Greenacres Congregational Church was re-opened on Thursday, May 31st, when a Recital was given by Mr. C. H. Fogg, of Manchester. His programme included selections from the works of Mendelssohn, MacMaster, Grieg, Rossini, Carter, Wormser, Moskowsky, and Spinney.

CHELTHENHAM.—On Sunday evening, May 27th, a selection of music was given in Highbury Congregational Church at the close of the usual service. The programme included the anthems, "Break forth into joy," "Lighten our darkness," and "The psalm of life," a solo, "Lord God of Abraham" (*Elijah*), several organ solos, and one hymn. Mr. A. G. Bloodworth presided at the organ with his usual ability.

TORQUAY.—After the usual practice of the Belgrave Congregational Church Choir, on the 8th ult., Mr. W. Staddon (the conductor) was made the recipient of a very gratifying testimonial in the shape of an ivory baton, silver-mounted and engraved, a brass music stand with case, and an address from the members of the choir, in appreciation of his valuable services as honorary conductor. Mr. J. Redmore, in making the presentation, spoke of the very high esteem in which

Mr. Staddon was held by the choir. Mr. Staddon, in a few words, thanked the choir for their gift.

HUDDERSFIELD.—The anniversary services in connection with the Wesleyan Sunday School, Outlane, were held on Sunday the 10th ult., when sermons were preached in the morning and afternoon by the Rev. Joel Mallinson, of Edgerton, and in the evening by Mr. A. A. Burton, B.A., of Marsh. Hymns and anthems, were rendered by the scholars, assisted by the excellent choir in connection with the chapel, which was considerably augmented for the occasion, under the able conductorship of Mr. Eli Pilling. Mr. J. W. Batley accompanied on the organ, in conjunction with an efficient orchestral band. The anthems were "Fix'd in His everlasting seat" (*Samson*), quartet, "Judge me, O Lord" (Misses E. Pilling and M. Morton, and Messrs. Eli Pilling and J. W. Pilling), chorus, "I will give thanks" (Mozart). After the Benediction a beautiful prize vesper, "Humbly on our knees we fall" (Maxfield), was excellently sung, after which, Handel's old, yet ever new, "Hallelujah" chorus received a grand rendering. Notwithstanding the inclement state of the weather the services were largely attended, and the collections amounted to over £38.

TONBRIDGE.—In recognition of the valuable and successful services rendered to the Wesleyan Chapel Choir by its conductor, Mr. J. Kimmins, A.R.C.O., the choir on Wednesday evening, the 13th ult., presented him with a handsome diamond ring, on the inside being inscribed the words, "Tonbridge Wesleyan Choir, 1894." The presentation, which was made by the choir secretary, Mr. H. A. Grindrod, took place at the residence of Mr. W. Baldwin, one of the stewards of the chapel, who had invited the choir to supper.

NOTTINGHAM.—Mr. J. F. Blasdale, who has been organist at the Queen's Walk Congregational Church for upwards of ten years, has recently been appointed organist and choir-master at Tennyson Street Wesleyan Church, Nottingham, in succession to Mr. John Cullen, R.A.M., who has accepted another post.

Staccato Notes.

MR. REDHEAD, the well-known tune writer, has retired from the post of organist at St. Mary Magdalen, Paddington, after thirty years' work there. A testimonial is being raised for him.

M. RUBINSTEIN'S new sacred opera, *Christus*, was performed at Stuttgart on the 2nd ult. for the first time, the composer conducting.

MR. COWEN has completed the alterations to his *Signa*, which has been reduced from four to two acts.

MISS LEHMANN is shortly to be married to Mr. Bedford, and will probably retire from the profession.

M. JEAN DE RESZBEE is said to receive £200 per night at the opera—the highest sum ever received by a tenor in London.

MADAME CATHERINE PENNA died of acute peritonitis on the 6th ult.

A MEETING has been held in Liverpool, at which the Lord Mayor presided, to inaugurate a memorial to Mr. W. T. Best.

THE Swedish Choir visited Westminster Abbey during their visit to England, and, standing round Madame Lind-Goldschmidt's monument, sang a requiem of Josephson. Mr. Otto Goldschmidt was present.

THE London Gregorian Choral Association held their twenty-fourth annual festival at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 7th ult.

THE jubilee number of the *Musical Times* is sold out.

MR. HAMISH McCUNN is just finishing his opera, *Jeanie Deans*, which will be performed by the Carl Rosa Opera Company.

THE testamentary dispositions of the late Madame Trebelli have been the subject of an unpleasant lawsuit.

IN opening the new College of Music at Leeds Sir Joseph Barnby said it had been his lot to come into contact with the first musicians of the day, both on the Continent and from America, and they all seemed to agree that choral music had reached a higher place in England than anywhere, and Leeds, therefore chorally, was the centre of the universe. It was gratifying to him to find decentralisation was the order of the day. The present state of music in England was more promising and satisfactory than it had ever been.

ADMIRERS of "Cheer, boys, Cheer," "A Life on the Ocean Wave," and other songs by the veteran composer, Mr. Henry Russell, will be glad to learn that he intends to publish at an early date a volume of random reminiscences. The book will be published simultaneously in London and New York.

UNDER the direction of Mr. Ernest Cavour Mr. Ben Davies will give about 20 concerts on the Continent in the next autumn. The first will take place on the 22nd of October, the last on the 17th of November. He will sing also in Vienna and Budapest on this tour.

AS we go to press the Handel Festival is being held. Judging by the rehearsal which took place at the Crystal Palace on the 22nd ult., the Festival promises to be a great success. Mr. Manns has spared no pains to find a thoroughly efficient chorus, and to rehearse them carefully. The band is composed of our finest players, and the soloists are of course the pick of the profession.

To Correspondents.

A. L.—Thanks, but we have no room for it.

C. J. B.—Too late.

F. S.—It should be written on three staves.

W. M.—See *The Organists' Magazine of Voluntaries* for May.

E. R.—Get Stainer's "Harmony," published by Novello.

The following are thanked for their letters:—W. S. (Tonbridge); T. S. B. (Bournemouth); F. A. L. (Coventry); W. J. (Newcastle); D. K. M. (Glasgow); M. A. C. (Bury); T. W. (Colchester); E. S. (Flint); C. D. (Warwick).

Accidentals.

"Did you like the concert, little girl?" said a papa who had taken his five-year-old daughter to one for the first time.

"Yes," replied the tot, "but it wasn't nuffin' but music."

JOSIAH: "I noticed a powerful smell of smoke in church, did you?"

Mandy: "Law me, Josiah, don't you know all these city churches use pipe organs?"

BROWN: "Did the christening of the twins go off all right?" Mr. Poppeigh: "Yes; but I didn't like the hymn the choir sang." Brown: "What did they sing?" Mr. Poppeigh: "Still there's more to follow."

OFFICIAL: "Why do you sign your name J John B. B. Bronson?" asked Hawkins.

"Because it is my name," said Bronson; "I was christened by a minister who stuttered."

"PROFESSOR Schrawkins turns out a great many musicians, doesn't he?"

"I don't know; but, after hearing his pupils sing, it is easy to understand why he should."